(e) Subscribers can make payment through internet wherein payment updation is through electronic media, which eliminates the chances of wrong disconnection.

Creation of New Department of Telecom Services

678. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that another Department has been created as Department of Telcom Services apart from DoT;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) where shall it draw its personnel from; and

(d) whether it is not against the Government policy of downsizing of administration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. In March, 1999, Government announced the New Telecom Policy (NTP) which *inter-alia* states as follows:

"The Government has decided to separate the policy and licensing functions of the Department of Telecommunications from the service provision functions as a precursor to corporatisation."

In pursuance of the above objective, the Government has created on 15-10-1999, the Department of Telecom Services, and allocated to it the service provision functions previously being handled by the Department of Telecommunications. Bulk of the Staff and officers of the erstwhile Department of Telecom are doing the work in the newly created Department of Telecom Services, and as such there has been no new addition.

Performance of Calcutta Telephone District

679. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the latest Comptroller and Auditor General report on the telecom sector for the financial year 1997-98 has revealed that the performance of the Calcutta Telephone District was the poorest in all respects among the metros and also compared to the all India average for the various telecom circles with respect to

operational costs, customer services, trunk and local call efficiencies; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the remedial measures proposed to be taken, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) In Para 13 of Chapter 4 of the report of C&AG of India for the year ended March 98, which was placed before the House on 29.10.99, C&AG of India has made certain observations about performance parameters of Calcutta Telephone District. Facts and figures mentioned in the report are being verified with Calcutta Telephone District and their comments sought so that remedial measures may be initiated, where necessary.

Telelink Facilities in West Bengal

680. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in the country enjoying telelink till now;

(b) how many of these villages belong to the State of West Bengal at present;

(c) the number of villages proposed to be linked by the end of this fiscal year in the country; and

(d) how many villages in West Bengal would come under telelink benefits by this year end?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (d) The status as on 1.11.99 and the plan for the current fiscal are as under:

	Country as a whole	West Bengal
No. of Villages	607,491	38,337
No. of Villages having Telecom. Facility (1.11.99)	344,508	16,552
Plans (Targets) for the current fiscal.	45,136	5,5000